

## Reply to the Followers



**Y**OUR messenger, who left on the nineteenth day of the third month, arrived here with your letter at the hour of the dog (7:00–9:00 P.M.) on the twenty-first. Now Nichiren’s life-long prayer and desire will be achieved in an instant. And this fits the Buddha’s prediction regarding the fifth five hundred years,<sup>1</sup> just as one half of a tally matches the other. In the end, if the slanderous proponents of the True Word, Zen, and other schools are summoned and brought together to confront me, and right and wrong are decided, the people of Japan will all become my disciples and lay supporters.

Of my disciples, the priests will become teachers to the emperors and retired emperors, while the lay believers will be ranked as the ministers of the left and right. And moreover, everyone in the entire land of Jambudvipa will come to revere this teaching. What happiness! What happiness!

Nichiren

The twenty-first day of the third month in the first year of Koan (1278)

Reply to the followers



### Background

This letter was addressed to the Daishonin’s followers living in Kamakura. It appears that preparations were under way in Kamakura for a public debate to determine which was correct, the

teaching of the Daishonin or the teachings of the True Word, Zen, and other schools. A report about this was conveyed with great haste to the Daishonin. This letter is his reply.

### Note

1. This prediction is found in the “Medicine King” chapter of the Lotus Sutra: “After I have passed into extinction, in the last five-hundred-year period you must spread it [the Law] abroad widely through-

out Jambudvipa and never allow it to be cut off.” The “last five-hundred-year period” corresponds to the phrase “fifth five hundred years” in the text. Both indicate the beginning of the Latter Day of the Law.